

Tailor

Alter, fit and make clothing by hand and machine. No licence, learn in a shop or at college, and the pay is modest until you own the shop.

TYPICAL PAY

\$40,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$32k to \$54k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 3 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Alteration shops, dry cleaners, menswear and bridal stores, hom...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 10 to 12
Sewing and fashion classes if your school has them. Sew for yourself and friends. Take in a thrift-store jacket.
- 2 Alterations job or college** 1 to 3 years
Dry cleaners and department stores hire helpers who can already hem and take in seams. Or take a fashion techniques or sewing program at a college; LaSalle College in Montreal and colleges in Toronto and Vancouver run them.
- 3 Learn fitting** 1 to 2 years
Pinning a garment on a person and knowing what to change. This is what separates a sewer from a tailor.
- 4 Menswear, bridal or bespoke** 3 to 10 years
Suits and wedding dresses are where the skilled, better-paid work is. Bespoke tailors train for many years under a master.
- 5 Your own shop** 5 years and up
An alterations storefront or a home studio with regular clients.

Pros and cons

- + No licence, start with a sewing test
- + Can work from home or own a small shop
- + Calm, skilled handwork
- Low pay unless you own the shop or do bespoke
- Repetitive strain in hands, neck and back
- Job Bank rates prospects as limited in Ontario and Quebec

Good to know

About 12,600 tailors

Job Bank counts roughly 12,600 people working as tailors and dressmakers in Canada in 2023, and expects supply and demand to stay roughly balanced through 2033.

The jacket is the test

Shortening sleeves on a jacket with working buttonholes, or taking in the shoulders, is the hardest common alteration. Tailors who can do it cleanly get hired by menswear stores first.

Optional boosts

Bridal alterations. Menswear and suit tailoring. Pattern drafting. Costume for theatre, film and dance.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Tailor, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Job Bank: Tailors and dressmakers, employment requirements

Job Bank: Tailor, job prospects

LaSalle College (Montreal): fashion programs

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/tailor>



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